

The Malay Separatist Movement in Southern Siam and the British, 1945-1949

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The Pacific war, which ended in 1945, had undoubtedly aroused a spirit of nationalism among colonized Southeast Asian countries. The Malays in Malaya, for the first time, united in opposing the British, while the Indonesian announced their independence and fought against the Dutch colonialist. There were some Malayan and Indonesian nationalists who called for the liberation of the Malay world from western colonialism and the creation of a 'Greater Malaysia' (Melayu Raya). The growth of the nationalist movements in South-east Asia had apparently influenced the Malays of South Siam and given birth to agitation for liberation from the Siamese rule. It is the intention of this paper to consider the nature of the movement, the circumstances in which the separatists' cause waxed and waned by 1949 and the attitude adopted by the British colonial authorities in Malaya in the context of the Malayan-Siamese border relations.

Ever since her forcible annexation in 1832 and the abolition of the Malay Sultanate in 1902, the Malays of Patani had nourished a deep smouldering resentment against this forcible incorporation into Thai speaking Buddhist Siam.¹ A series of abortive revolts broke out from time to time, and though each attempt was penalised by severe reprisals from Bangkok, the Patani Malays never ceased to hope and pray for liberation. Eventually at the end of the Pacific war her chance of obtaining relief seemed brighter. Siam was then a defeated belligerent. There was common expectation among the Malays on both sides of the border that the Siamese rule would not only be terminated in the Northern Malay States but also in the Malay areas of Siam itself. Annexation of the Patani area and Setul to British Malaya was regarded as a reasonable penalty for Siamese attitude during the war and the prospect was pleasing to the Malays in South Siam as well as in Malaya and also to British interests in Malaya.

In was to this end that Tengku Abdul Jalal, ex-member of Parliament for Narathiwat, and other Patani leaders submitted a petition to the British Secretary of State for the Colonies on 1 November 1945.² The petition stated the Malay grievances and requested 'the Allied Nations' to 'help us in our desire, and release us from the hands of Siam'.³ The requested was made on the basis of the San Francisco Declaration which stated that 'all dependent states should be given freedom and the people of such states should be allowed to administer their own countries in the ways most suitable to them'.⁴ They argued that:

Pattani is really a Malay country formerly ruled by Malay Rajah for generations, but has been Siam's dependency only since about 50 year ago. Now the Allied Nations ought to help the return of this country to the Malays so that they can have it united with other countries in the Peninsula.⁵

The petition concluded with a warning that if the allied nations delayed or were late to give a peaceful settlement in Patani and its districts surely there would be intense feeling of dissatisfaction and future danger to all the Malay population.⁶

In the event, however, for the reasons of international politics, the Siamese were treated with leniency in the Peace Treaty of 1 January 1946 and these hopes were not fulfilled. No transfer of new territory to British Malaya was enforced.⁷ This caused intense disappointment to the Malays. On 15 January, 1946 the Patani Malays submitted another petition to the British Government.⁸ While expressing their hopes that they would be released from Siamese rule, they also demanded the incorporation of the four provinces with British Malaya.

Although the annexation of Patani provinces was not effected, the publicity given to the issue by the Malayan and Siamese newspapers caused considerable embarrassment to the British Government. The Siamese took up the matter vigorously with an anti-British tone. To calm the local feelings, the British Embassy in Bangkok issued a statement to the Siamese press denying that the British Government had any interest in the affair. It stated that:

Had the Government of the United Kingdom wished to raise any question concerning South Siam, this would have been done at the time when the negotiations covering the cessation of hostilities between Siam and the United Kingdom were still going on.⁹

There was no doubt that the British Government was not interested in Patani affairs but the acceptance of the petition by the Malayan authorities worried the British authorities in Bangkok, Singapore and London. H. Brain of the SACSEA Office in Singapore expressed his disapproval at the action taken by the Malayan military authorities in acknowledging the acceptance of the petition.¹⁰ He thought that some sort of a demarche was needed to avoid misunderstanding with Thailand. H.R. Bird, the British Charges d'affaires in Bangkok, also was of the same opinion.¹¹ He reminded that the Muslims South Siam had never been British subjects and he also had never heard of claim to extension of protection to 'Mohamedans' on non-British territory on the ground of their religion. It was only on such ground that a demarche could be made with the Siamese Government.

Wilson-Young of the Foreign Office also argued that the Malays had no real grounds for alleging that they were persecuted or oppressed.¹² Since the end of the war some remarkable progress had been made by the Pridi Govern

harta masyarakat adat yang tiada catatan sebagai 'customary land' pada geran dan Daftar Mukim dibahagikan mengikut peraturan adat. Mereka juga mempersoalkan tentang kekaburan seksyen 25 CTE yang mengatakan 'nothing in this Enactment contained shall affect the distribution of the estate, not being customary estate, of any deceased person ...'. Burton berpendapat bahawa Pemungut Hasil Tanah berkenaan gagal mempertimbangkan seksyen 25 yang kabur itu. Tambahnya lagi dalam sesuatu penyelesaian perhatian harus diberi berdasarkan kepada 'personal law' seseorang itu; kemudian pastikan siapakah yang akan berhak mengikut undang-undang tersebut. Jikalau persetujuan di kalangan pihak yang membuat tuntutan tidak dicapai maka Pemungut Hasil Tanah mestilah mewariskan harta-harta itu mengikut peraturan perwarisan yang telah diamalkan oleh tuan tanah yang telah mati itu.

Burton mengatakan bahawa Pemungut Hasil Tanah berkenaan mengtakrifkan seksyen 25 berdasarkan kepada peruntukan di bawah seksyen 10 CTE 1909, iaitu 'apabila tanah adat telah berpindah milik kepada orang bukan adat, tanah itu tidak tertakluk kepada adat lagi, dan catatan 'Customary Land' yang terdapat dalam Daftar Mukim dan juga dokumen hakmiliknya hendaklah dibatalkan'. Undang-undang mengatakan tanah yang telah dibatalkan catatan 'Customary Land' pada gerannya, tanah itu tidak boleh ditadbirkan mengikut peraturan adat. Tetapi undang-undang tidak mengatakan tanah yang tidak terdapat atau belum didaftarkan 'Customary Land' tidak boleh ditadbirkan berdasarkan pada peraturan adat. Adat adalah untuk manusia, adat berhubung dengan tanah adalah kerana orang yang memilikinya tertakluk kepada adat. G.H. Nash dalam membuat perintah adalah berdasarkan kepada prinsip 'Law follows the land'. Oleh kerana tiada terdapat catatan 'Customary Land' pada geran tanah tersebut maka beliau enggan membuat perintah berdasarkan kepada hukum adat. Sebaliknya beliau mentakrifkan 'personal law' mereka yang terlibat adalah hukum Islam. Bagi Burton, beliau membuat pengadilan berdasarkan kepada prinsip 'Law follows the person', pembahagian dibuat mengikut hukum adat kerana pemilik asal, 'appellant' dan 'respondent' kesemuanya adalah anggota masyarakat adat.

Kesan dari perkembangan kes ini menyebabkan pindaan enakmen telah dibuat iaitu 'Negri Sembilan Enactment No. 1 of 1930'. Enakmen ini telah menjelaskan sekiranya tanah dalam Daftar Mukim direkodkan dengan perkataan 'Customary Land' tanah itu adalah tertakluk kepada peraturan adat. Jika terdapat catatan 'non-customary' tanah itu ditadbirkan di bawah Probate and Administration Enactment.¹⁴

Pindaan ini menerangkan bahawa catatan 'customary land' bagi tanah-tanah yang terdaftar dalam Daftar Mukim boleh dibuat dalam dua kes - pertama, dengan bukti bahawa tanah itu dimiliki melalui peraturan adat dan nama pemiliknya anggota adat yang perempuan. Ini bermakna harta carian yang telah diwariskan kepada generasi perempuan boleh dipertimbangkan

Government the following demands:

- i. The appointment of single individual with full powers to govern the four provinces of Patani, Yala, Narathiwat and Setul and in particular having authority to dismiss, suspend or replace all government servants, this individual to be local born in one of the four provinces and to be elected by the people;
- ii. Eighty per cent of government servants in the four provinces to be Muslim;
- iii. Malay and Thai to be official languages;
- iv. Malay to be the medium of instruction in the primary schools;
- v. Muslim law to be recognised and enforced in a separate muslim court where the one-time Kadhi sat as an assessor;
- vi. All revenue and income derived from the four provinces to be utilised within them; and
- vii. The formation of a Muslim Board having full powers to direct all Muslim affairs under the supreme authority of the head of state mentioned in No. 1.²²

The ultimate purpose of the demands was the reconstruction of the entire territory as an autonomous Malay state of Patani having a local-born and elected Malay as head of state.

However, before these promises could be implemented, the Thamrong government was forcibly overthrown in a military coup of November 8, 1947.²³ The military coup which brought Pibul Songgram to power caused fears among the Malays lest his return would mean a recurrence of the repressive policy that the Malays had experienced during his first regime. Thus, it was not surprising when a fresh agitation was soon reported from the region. The Malay leaders were said to have held several secret meetings in Patani province to discuss the issue.²⁴ The meetings unanimously decided to appoint Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen²⁵ as their representative in dealing with the Siamese government.

In view of the situation, Phya Phipit Pakdi, a member of the Provisional Assembly, advised the government to accede to the seven-point demands of the Malays which were submitted to Thamrong government earlier.²⁶ He explained that there was great misunderstanding in regard to the news that the Malays were seeking a breakaway from Siamese rule. 'All they want is a separate home of their own but within the same fence'.²⁷ Though some improvement in the matter of Muslim laws and local administration were made by the government, the Malays still remained unsatisfied. Since the improvement of the entire region was ineffective, the Malay perceived it as a token concession. Consequently the resistance among the Malays increased.

The government regarded the situation as more serious since they believed the exiled Senior statesman, Pridi Banomyong, who was accompanied by his former Muslim Adviser, Chaem Promyong, was in touch with the recalcitrant

Malays. When signs of Malay resistance became apparent, the Siamese authorities reacted swiftly by arresting Haji Sulong and his fellow associates on January 16, 1948.²⁸

By this action, the Siamese government hoped to suppress the movement while it was still nascent and before it could spread widely. But the arrest touched off simmering discontent in the region and the flames were rapidly fanned by the Malay politicians across the border in Malaya.²⁹ More extremist elements among them seized upon the event to agitate for open rebellion against the Siamese government.

The increasing tension in the Southern provinces and the rise of agitation for separation from Siam not only worried the Siamese but the British authorities as well. The British authorities in Malaya were concerned lest the unrest in the four provinces would jeopardise the stability and hamper the post-war rehabilitation or both Malaya and Siam.

After the January arrest of Haji Sulong, a number of Patani Malay leaders sought shelter in Malayan territory. These Malay refugee groups had formed themselves into a body known as '*Gabungan Melayu Patani Raya*' (The Association of Malays of Greater Patani) or *GEMPAR*, with its principals office in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.²⁹ The objects of the association were given as follows:

- i. to unite all Malays in South Siam and their descendents;
- ii. to look after their welfare; and
- iii. to encourage cooperation among them and to improve their education and culture.

However, the real objectives of *GEMPAR* as stated in its secret instruction to its members were:

- i. amalgamation of the four South Siam provinces into one under the Federation of Malaya, and
- ii. the termination of Siamese rule by means of propaganda and the formation of secret revolutionary committee.³⁰

From its formation, *GEMPAR* began to publicise the sufferings of the Malays of Siam both in and outside Malaya. On March 16, 1948, *GEMPAR* issued a pamphlet entitled 'Some Facts about Malays in South Siam'.³¹ These pamphlets were distributed to the Malay political bodies as well as the press. The Malay press in editorials and Malay political bodies in their general assemblies expressed concern over the predicament of Patani, while Malay radicals in Malay Nationalist Party took direct action to fan the flames of revolt. In fact, Ahmed Boestaman, the ex-leader of *Angkatan Pemuda Insaf* (API), had

approached Tengku Abdul Jalal and told him that his men were prepared to go to South Siam and organise armed resistance.³²

The question of Patani also confronted the major UMNO party with a most awkward problem, having to choose between 'obeying the instinctive of every Malay heart and the dictates of higher British policy'.³³ There were fear among the UMNO leaders that if they remained passive towards the Patani issue they would lose ground to the radicals in Malayan domestic politics.

These developments in Malaya were observed with concern by the Malayan authorities. In fact, the British were cautious in matters which might affect Anglo-Siamese relations. Immediately after the arrest of Haji Sulong, Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen had been summoned to Kuala Lumpur where he was warned by Sir Edward Gent, the Malayan Union Governor, not to get involved with the politics of Siam for the British Government would not tolerate Malaya being used as a base for such a project.³⁴ In fact this policy was again reconfirmed by Lord Listowel of the British Colonial Office when he visited Kelantan in early March and talked with Mahyideen.³⁵ Lord Listowel reminded that there should not be any expectation of direct help from the British Government. This advice was given following the report that *GEMPAR* was issuing propaganda that 'their liberation from Siamese domination will soon take place, probably with the help of the British'. While expressing his conviction that the Siamese would come to their senses and see that the Malays got affair deal, Listowel also suggested that those who were not satisfied in Patani would emigrate into Malaya. To Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen, neither compromise was practicable or acceptable to the Malays. He refused to believe the Siamese leaders when they said that they might give concessions now, but thought that later they would revert to the same old system and would oppress the Malays more that ever, for he was sure that the Siamese had 'pinned' their minds on making the Malays into the Siamese at any cost. With regard to emigrating into Malaya, he was of the opinion that the Malays would not emigrate. He assured Lord Listowel that the majority of the Malays had decided to join Malaya by a transfer of territory not of movement of population. Unless this was done, the four provinces would be a thorn in the Siamese ribs and would be a source of trouble in Southeast Asia. Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen also pointed to the danger of the Communists who would take the oppournity to play on the feelings of the people, which would be a fertile ground for them to achieve their aims.

Soon after the Khuang Government was recognised by the British, G.F. Thompson, the British Ambassador in Bangkok met the Siamese Foreign Minister, Phya Srivisar to discuss, among other things, the Patani Malay problems.³⁶ Prior to this, on March 5, the newly-appointed Prime Minister, Khuang Aphaiwong had admitted during the internal policy debate that there was unrest prevailing in South Siam.³⁷ To overcome the problems, some reforms were to be introduced in the four provinces. For example, complete freedom of worship was guaranteed, the Malay language would be taught in primary

schools, and there was a transfer of corrupt officials. Furthermore, there was a promise of the appointment of 'respected' Muslim-Malays as special commissioners to act as religious affairs advisers to government.

While assuring the Aphaiwong Government that it was not be the intention of the British Government to interfere in the internal affairs of Siam, Thompson warned the Siamese Foreign Minister Srivisar that the agitation in Patani was a danger to relations between Siam and Malaya, since it could only be too easily exploited by the hostile critics outside Siam. In proof of this, he mentioned the attitude of the Malayan Press. He also hoped that the new government would implement the recent promises made by Khuang Aphaiwong in the assembly. Phya Srivisar realised the danger and assured Thompson that the Siamese Government would do its best to solve the impasses. In his report to the Foreign Office, Thompson pointed out that Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen was the chief instigator. He hoped that the Malayan authorities would use its influence to curb his activities. Meanwhile he instructed Guy Madoc, the First Secretary at the British Embassy in Bangkok, to visit the four provinces in order to get a first hand appreciation of the problem.³⁸ After completing his tour Madoc went to Kuala Lumpur to discuss the Patani problem with Sir Edward Gent. Both of them agreed that a detente should be found. Referring to Thomson's telegram to the Foreign Office about Mahyideen, Gent explained to Madoc that Mahyideen was against violence and had unfailingly advised moderation on the Patani Malays.³⁹ It was because of this attitude that he was losing influence among his followers. Madoc, however, reminded him that the Siamese still considered Mahyideen as the responsible leader of the rebellious counsels.

Realising the problem, Madoc suggested a project for Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen to be invited to Bangkok to confer with the Siamese Prime Minister. This idea had, in fact, been aired by Tuan Haji Hama Wai-Wai, the Islamic Judge from Yala, on February 4, 1948.⁴⁰ Madoc believed that such a visit might help Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen to restore his lost influence with the Patani Malays. On April 7, Gent informed R. Whittington, the British Counsellor in Bangkok, about Madoc's plan to arrange a conference between Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen and Pibul Songgram.⁴¹ At the same time, he enquired whether the Siamese authorities were using any reasonable publicity to answer the Malay allegations. 'There seems to me', he added, 'a serious risk of the situation drifting into a dangerous course of events if reliable and official information is not fairly freely given out which can remove the current assertion of oppressive actions by the Siamese Government'.⁴²

However, by the time Whittington received the telegram, Khuang Aphaiwong was forced to retire by the Coup group in favour of Pibul Songgram.⁴³ Realising his unpopularity with the Malays, Pibul Songgram invited Abdullah Wang Puteh, an influential Malay and also a Member of Parliament for Setul, to join his Cabinet as Deputy Minister of Education.⁴⁴ He was expected to be helpful to the government in solving the problems in the four Malay provinces.

The accession of Pibul Songgram to power in April 1948 and the memory of his former repressive policy during his wartime regime, however, had created anxiety among the Malays. Thus, it was not surprising when the unrest became more pronounced. In fact, Pibul was warned by his Assemblymen that unless the Siamese Government implemented official promises made earlier to the Malays the separatist movement would be bound to grow.⁴⁵

Before any official move could be made, a serious outbreak occurred at Dusun Nyior, a small village in Narathiwat province.⁴⁶ The trouble was said to be caused by the Siamese police who intervened in a Muslim religious ceremony. The two days of fighting between the police and the Malay villagers cost many lives and hundreds of Malays fled to Malaya. The despatch of troops restored peace in the province. Malayan Government cooperation was sought to seal the borders as to prevent any arms or armed personnels from crossing into South Siam from Malaya.

The outbreak of the Malay uprising at Dusun Nyior worried the Malayan authorities. Although the Siamese Government managed to suppress the Malay uprisings, it still feared that the situation would be exploited by the leftwing Malays and the communists for their interests. There were increased indications of left-wing Malays and Communist interests in Southern Siam. Edward Gent, the High Commissioner, in fact, had been informed by the Chief Minister of Kelantan, Datok Nik Ahmed Kamil, that since the outbreak, the Malay left under Ahmed Boestaman had organised guerilla units to help the Malays of Southern Siam to rebel against the government.⁴⁷ It was due to the timely intervention of Tengku Abdul Jalal and Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen that the operation was stopped. However, the Malay left was still trying to infiltrate into Southern Siam as teachers.

It was feared also that the increasing interest of the Malay left and the Communists in the problem would override any restraining influence of Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen and might even bring such pressure to bear on him that he had to take more active part for dynastic reasons. There were fears also that UMNO, the largest Malays political party, would be forced to take up the cause of the Malays in Southern Siam in order to offset the leftists. Malcolm MacDonald, the British Commissioner-General in South East Asia, in his telegram to the Secretary of State for Colonies and copy to the Foreign Office on March 5, expressed his concern at the deteriorating situation, particularly the active participation of Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen and the Malay organisations in the Federation in affairs of Southern Siam.⁴⁸ With regards to Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen, MacDonald agreed that Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen was the moving spirit behind the subversive movement in Southern Siam, but he agreed with Gent that more repressive measures, other than a warning, against him would only cause serious reaction throughout the Federation among Malays, both Malay nationalist Party (MNP) and UMNO so long as there was no evidence

Siamese side that serious complaints of Malays in South Siam were being remedied. He hoped that British recognition of the Pibul Government would make it easier for the British Ambassador in Bangkok to impress to the Siamese authorities the gravity of political unrest in South Siam. He also hoped that the British Ambassador could ascertain the Siamese Government's attitude to suggestion that Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen or other suitable Malay representatives might visit Bangkok.

A.M. Palliser of the Foreign Office agreed that some steps should be taken to curb both Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen and the Malay organisations from participation in Patani affairs.⁴⁹ The presence of these two forms of subversive influence in the Malay states in South Siam would increase the potential danger of the Patani situation. There was not only the risk of conflict between Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen's agents and the Siamese but also the possibilities of friction between Siam and Malaya and also the prospect of armed strife between the followers of Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen and those of Malay Nationalist Party. The situation was further complicated by the fact that UMNO might find it necessary themselves to espouse the cause of the Malays in Patani in order to prevent political capital being made out of the trouble by the MNP.

As far as the left-wing influence were concerned, Palliser thought they could be best be combatted by vigilant police activity on both sides of the border and by the form of cooperation between the Siamese and Malayan police authorities.

With regards to Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen, Palliser thought it desirable that his intentions should be forced into the open. He strongly welcome the suggestion that Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen would visit Bangkok or alternatively met the Siamese Minister of State for Moslem Affairs at the border if such a meeting would be more acceptable to the Siamese. An effort should then be made to get his clearest possible statement from Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen of what he thought should be done for the Patani Malays and to give full publicity to everything that was done by the Siamese to meet his point of view. It was also essential that the Siamese should take adequate steps to meet the Malay point of view and that they should give full and accurate publicity to what was done. A visit by an independent correspondent should also to good. If serious efforts were made by the Siamese to allay Malay grievances the potential danger of interference by Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen should be greatly reduced since it was clear that he was still continuing his subversive activities, it would be obvious that he was doing it from motive of ambition rather than altruism. Palliser agreed with MacDonald that any action of a more overtly repressive nature should not be taken except in the last resort.

Meanwhile, Pibul Songgram set up a Pacification Commission, headed by Phraya Amraridhdamrong, a veteran administrator, and comprising four others, including Abdullah Wang Puteh, to deal with the situation in the

Siamese Southern provinces and to recommend measures to remedy Malay grievances.⁵⁰

While touring the troubled region, Abdullah Wang Puteh crossed the border to Kota Bharu for talks with Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen on the Malay unrest.⁵¹ It was reported that Abdullah had told Mahyideen that the Pibul Government now considered it desirable to negotiate with the leaders of the South Siam Malay Movement, before the position worsened and that Pibul was prepared to hold a conference at which representatives of Siam and the Malay States had equal status, with the Siamese Government representatives.⁵²

Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen was willing to consider the proposal provided that the Siamese Government agreed to accept his four conditions:

- i. Haji Sulong was to be released in order to attend the meeting.
- ii. Leaders of the South Siam movement were to be allowed to return and their personal safety guaranteed.
- iii. Police patrols in South Siam were to be withdrawn to towns.
- iv. The Siamese Government invited him officially to the proposed conference sending a copy of the invitation to the British and United States Ambassadors.⁵³

Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen also intended to take with him Tengku Abdul Jalal and possibly Mr. Braddell, a lawyer, if the conference took place.

On receiving the news about the Abdullah - Mahyideen meeting in Kota Bahru, Scrivener of the British Colonial Government in Singapore immediately informed Whittington, the British Counsellor in Bangkok about it.⁵⁴ On May 21, Whittington approached Phya Srivisar, the Siamese Foreign Minister, to enquire about the Abdullah-Mahyideen meeting.⁵⁵ Phya Srivisar, however, told him that he had not heard of the meeting. Reports on Phya Srivisar's attitude, Whittington was doubtful whether the Siamese government was in favour of having a conference with Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen whom the Siamese Foreign Minister regarded as 'the chief instigator of the Dusun Nyior uprising'. He would not raise the matter again with the Siamese Government unless otherwise instructed. Nevertheless he would continue to stress to the Siamese government the danger it posed to both Malaya and Siam if the Patani problem remained unsolved. Should the Siamese government decide on their own accord to invite Mahyideen, he thought it would be fatal to introduce a British Lawyer, Braddell, to the scene. Braddell's presence would surely expose British to the accusation of interference in Siamese internal affairs.

In response to Whittington's telegram, the Foreign Office argued that Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen was the most reasonable of all those involved in the present agitation in South Siam.⁵⁶ If, as he appeared to fear, he was losing power to the more extreme left wing elements also at work in the provinces, the British

Government could be faced a much more difficult and uncontrollable situation in which they would be unable to help as much as they should like. There were left-wing elements, it argued, including those person who had filtered from Sumatra, unlike Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen, who would seek to make political capital in Malaya out of their activities on behalf of Patani Malays. Furthermore, to the best of their knowledge, while Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen was pro-British and amenable to reason, those elements were neither.

The other danger was that the UMNO would be forced to take up the cause of the Patani Malays. The left-wing elements associated with MNP and the banned API headed by Ahmed Boestaman were capable of causing good deal of trouble, while it would be a serious embarrassment if UMNO, which was the major Malay party and largely represented both on the Federal Legislative Council and the State Councils in Malay States, became actively interest in Patani affairs.

The Foreign Office also pointed out that as a result of the new constitution of Malaya, the Malays for the first time since the liberation were taking an active part in the Government of the country and that the British Government must take into account the feelings of the Malays respecting those of the same race in Patani. There seemed to them a real danger of the situation worsening as long as the policies, or the self-confessed administrative short-comings of the Siamese Government, gave cause for resentment among the Malay population of Patani.

On the assumption that Pibul's offer a conference was genuine, the Foreign office's preliminary view was that Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen should be accompanied by a responsible officer of the Malayan Federation as well as by any adviser of his own whom he might care to bring, as it was obviously important that there should be someone present in the negotiations who could speak with authority on the view of the Federation Administration. Foreign Office felt that was most likely to be achieved if the talk were kept as informal as possible.

Whittington, in his reply on May 27, stressed that even if Abdullah and Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen did in fact met in Kota Bahru, he was doubtful whether Pibul made such an offer of a conference with the Malay leaders in the Southern movement.⁵⁷ It might be that Abdullah exceeded his instructions in quoting Pibul as he was reported to have done. His own impression was that Abdullah might possibly, as a result of a suggestion he made to Pibul in early May, have been instructed to made contact with Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen privately. However, he did not think that the Siamese Government was prepared to treat with Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen whom they regarded as the chief instigator of the Malay unrest.

Whittington also expressed his astonishment at the Foreign Office's suggestion that Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen should be accompanied to Bangkok by an officer of the Malayan Federation. He reminded the Foreign Office that Siam was an independent country and that the suggestion would quite

rightly be taken by them as a most offensive and unwarranted interference with their domestic affairs. The suggestion of the presence of a Malayan officer would immediately arouse suspicion already dormant, that there was a veiled British attempt to gain control of the Southern Malay provinces. He did not consider such suspicion would be entirely groundless. He quoted the Commissioner General's remark at a conference in Singapore on May 3 that 'the people in Malaya might have private sentiments and that it is a great pity the south States of Siam were not included in Malaya after the War'.

To clear up misunderstanding, the Foreign Office explained that the suggestion that a Malayan official should accompany Mahyideen was made under the impression that Pibul wanted a full dress conference with him to settle the whole problem.⁵⁸ The Foreign Office expressed its regret at the change of attitude on the part of the Siamese Government.

Malcolm MacDonald, the Commissioner-General also took up the issue. In his telegram to Whittington, MacDonald hoped that Whittington would accept his statements in the spirit in which they were offered.⁵⁹ They were purely academic and innocent reflection of a little bit of past history. However, he personally believed that it was a pity that circumstances made it impossible for territories in South Siam inhabited by Malays to be joined with Malaya after the war. This would substantially solve a number of problems, including the Patani Malays unrest which they were facing at the moment. MacDonald also voiced his fears that the problem was likely to be a continuing and possibly increasing source of embarrassment not only to the Siamese authorities but also to the Malayan authorities and therefore general British interests in Southeast Asia. However, he fully realised the strength of the arguments which were presented by the Foreign Office when the matter was considered by the Foreign Office at the end of the war. He assured Whittington that there was no question whatever about the loyal adherence of all officials concerned in Malayan service to Her Majesty Government's policy.

Because of the Siamese Government's attitude, MacDonald informed the Foreign Office of his decision not to send the suggested mission to Bangkok. He also decided to drop the idea of stopping in Bangkok on his way to Hong Kong on June 7 or on his return trip on June 14. This decision was made for two main reasons. Firstly, he felt that the Siamese Prime Minister might be suspicious and resentful of any approach made to him and, secondly he feared that such a visit might arouse undesirable speculation in Malaya concerning the object of the visit. Whittington's telegram to him recently seemed to confirm strongly that such a visit would be likely to do more harm than good at present. He also decided delay his intention of sending a purely personal message to Pibul expressing his concern at the situation which had arisen in South Siam. He also wanted to point out that though the problem was wholly within the jurisdiction of the Siamese authorities, it also had international repercussions. The problem had to a certain

extent caused some trouble to the Malayan authorities and therefore tended to affect Anglo-Siamese relations. At the same time he also warned both the Foreign Office and Whittington that the situation in South Siam could be easily exploited by the Malay extremists in Malaya. This in turn must have its effect on moderate Malay political leaders. Unless the situation improved, Dato' Onn, the President of UMNO, would be forced by his followers into making some kind of statement on the matter. Otherwise, UMNO would lose ground to the extremists. He mentioned that Dato' Onn had in fact proposed to go to Bangkok to discuss the matter with the Siamese authorities. However, on MacDonald advice, the idea was also dropped. Nevertheless MacDonald hoped to discuss the whole issue with Direck Jayanama, former Siamese Ambassador to the United Kingdom, when the latter visited Singapore in mid-July on his return to Bangkok.⁶⁰

Whittington, however, took a different view of MacDonald options. He did not believe that MacDonald brief visit to Bangkok in June would be connected in Thai minds with interference.⁶¹ Such a visit would be described as a traditional call made for convenience. He agreed to arrange an informal meeting with Pibul, whom he thought would surely be pleased and reassured that the British could still be sympathetic to him. On such an occasion, it would be natural to discuss matters of common interest, including the problem of Patani Malays. However, he did not recommend MacDonald's suggestion to send a personal message to Pibul as it might be more pointed and liable to offend susceptibilities that any informal discussions which might take place on the occasion of a visit. A message, in his opinion, would also be much less effective than personal contact. He agreed that much benefit might accrue from discussing the situation with Direck Jayanama in July. Not only could the Malayan point of view be explained to him, but he would probably be able to explain the Siamese stand point more lucidly than previously been done.

Pibul's decision not to call for a conference with Mahyideen also caused disappointment to the Colonial Office. In his letter to Grey of the Foreign Office, William did not believe that by merely warning Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen they would achieve an end to the agitation.⁶² The danger was that in place of him some much less manageable person would take the lead and an even more serious situation develop. The Colonial Office, stressed Williams, strongly felt that it was not enough just to allow the situation to drift. He recognised that the British Government had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of Siam but he reminded that it was not those in London who were affected by the situation but the Malays in Malaya. It was quite unrealistic to suppose that their feeling would be governed by the strict law of the position. All they knew was that people whom they had always regarded as of the same stock as themselves were reported to be suffering ill treatment. It was the Colonial Office's opinion that the situation would be likely to worsen and not improve relations with Siam should British agencies merely disinterest themselves in the matter.

Since no meeting was to be held between Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen and Pibul, Colonial Office strongly supported the reopening of the British Consulate in Songkhla.⁶³ It was hoped that the reopening of the Consulate would be helpful in achieving harmonious border relations.

On June 16, Direck Jayanama became the official guest of the British Commissioner-General.⁶⁴ During his brief stay in Singapore, Direck had the opportunity to discuss several issues with MacDonald and Dato' Onn including the Patani problems.

MacDonald explained to him how the Patani problem was liable to cause considerable embarrassment in Malaya and in what way it might affect the friendly relation between Malaya and Siam.⁶⁵ The Malayan authorities recognised the fact that it was an internal matter of Siam but it also of concern to Malaya. MacDonald hoped that the Siamese Government would feel able to introduce into those province any administrative or other changes which would make the Patani Malays content and deprive the extremist elements both in Siam and Malaya of alleged grievances which they could exploit to their mutual disadvantage.

Direck said that he fully understood the dilemma faced by the Malayan authorities and agreed to convey MacDonald's sentiments to Pibul when he reached home. Dato Onn also told him about the problems he had to face as the President of UMNO.⁶⁶ His followers had pressed him to make a declaration on the subject of friendship to Patani so as to prevent the communist elements among the Malays from monopolising all the political issues. So far he had succeeded in refusing of that kind. He explained to his followers that the Patani problems were not an internal matter of Siam but also that such a declaration would offend the Siamese authorities and be unhelpful to the Patani Malays.

At the beginning of the meeting Dato' Onn agreed, on Direck's suggestion, to prepare a memorandum to be submitted to Pibul. However, on advice of MacDonald, the idea was dropped. It was felt that it was improper for the Dato Onn to submit the memorandum through Direck as he was considered to belong to Pridi's group.⁶⁷ Furthermore, MacDonald himself was planning to visit Bangkok in November and Patani problems would be one of the issues to be discussed with the Siamese Government.

The Patani unrest, however, tended to fade into the background with the development of the far more serious Communists disorder in Malaya in June 1948 and the consequents risk that, when defeated, the Chinese Communists might infiltrate from Malaya into Southern Siam. There was also a risk that, prior to that, they might use South Siam as a base of operations.⁶⁸ To forestall that possibility, the British Government sought the Siamese Government cooperation to deal with the Communists established along the Malayan-Siam border. Accordingly, plans for closer cooperation between the Siamese and local authorities and Malayan authorities were agreed. The British Government, on her part, agreed to supply arms to five Siamese infantry Battalions stationed in

South Siam. Early in September, a state of emergency in the four border provinces was declared.

The declaration of a state of emergency in South Siam and the despatch of the Siamese forces to police the frontier, however, had worsened the situation in the Malay provinces. A press report stated that more Malays fled into Malaya because of a new wave of persecution carried out by the local Siamese authorities.⁶⁹ Cunyngham-Brown, the acting British Consul in Songkhla, confirmed the press report of the alleged persecution of the Malays by the local Siamese authorities. He did not believe that the Malayan authorities would be able to get real cooperation from the Siamese against the Communist while the Malay discontent persisted. He expressed his fears that if the Malays were pressed too hard they might be forced to make common cause with the Communists. He also blamed the British for 'letting them down' after the war and for not making any constructive suggestions for their betterment.⁷⁰

Cunyngham-Brown's report about the worsening situation in the Malay provinces caused some concern to the British authorities in Malaya about the advisability of supplying arms to the Siamese armed forces. There was the risk that the weapons would be used against the Malay inhabitants or lost to the terrorists.

Although Colonel Heslop, the British Military Attache, in Bangkok also voiced these fears, he was in favour of supplying arms to the Siamese infantry battalions in the South.⁷¹ The risk that the Siamese might use the arms to suppress the Malays or lose them to the terrorists might be overcome if they could secure some sort of assurance from the Siamese Government that the weapon would not be used against the Malays and if at the same time training could also be given to the Siamese police and military so as to increase their fighting ability.

G.F. Thompson, the British Ambassador, also was in favour of providing arms to the Siamese.⁷² He argued that assuming that the British were able to push the Communist northwards, the situation in the border would become really critical. His inclination would be to strengthen in advance the Siamese forces. His inclination would be to violently resisted by the British authorities in Malaya. Firstly, it was because of their emotional sympathy with the Malays and, secondly, because of the real risk that the loyalty and cooperation of the Malays in Malaya would be undermined by propaganda about the British having helped the Siamese to oppress their brethren in Siam still more that they had done already. He realised that the British Colonial officials, who were used to accustom to the just and orderly administration of native people, were always disappointed when foreigners failed to attain or enforce similar standards of government and, in his experience, their disappointment often found expression in an intense crusading zeal. This sometimes resulted in British interest in the wide sense, being subordinated to the real or imaginary, grievances of native minorities under brutal and corrupt foreign rule. Though he did not deny that the Siamese administration of the Malay provinces had been deplorable by the high

standard of the Malayan Civil Service, Thompson argued that the way in which the Malayan authorities had allowed discontent to be fanned by Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen and others from British territories, had encouraged those people to increase their agitation in the belief that in the end the British would come to their help. The belief was fading and in their disappointment, the Malay concern, as pointing out by Cunyngham-Brown in his report, deemed inclined to join the Communists.

In considering the situation, the British Government had to choose between two options:

- i. to help the Siamese with some arms and risk their use against the Malays or
- ii. to leave the Siamese ill-equipped and risk the eventual formation of a terrorist base in Siamese territory from which the Malayan border would be raided.

Thompson also blamed the Malayan authorities in Kota Bharu and Alor Star for spreading sensational reports about the alleged terrorist concentrations along the Siamese Malayan border which were largely exaggerated. He recommended that reports from native agents should be checked and graded before being accepted as otherwise it would cause unnecessary alarm and despondency and also strengthen the already widespread and rather unthinking ill-feelings against Siam.

While the matter was considered by the British authorities in London, Thompson suspended Cunyngham-Brown from duty and instructed him to leave Songkhla immediately.⁷³ His suspension came immediately after Thompson mistakenly thought that Cunyngham-Brown had written to the Malayan authorities recommending the invasion of south Siam.⁷⁴ In his letter to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Thompson considered Cunyngham-Brown's recommendations as 'so outrageous' because they would only lead to the gravest consequences, including major military commitments.

This country under its present (or indeed any) leadership would never acquiesce in a British invasion or cession of territory under force. Moreover, any action in lines proposed would be catastrophic to the East and, I submit, most harmful to our relations with the United States. Also, it would be a literal godsend to Russia. Are we really to deal with Siam as Hitler dealt with Czechoslovakia? And Where is Malaya to get her vital rice if we deliberately turn Siamese into bitter enemies?⁷⁵

Thompson pointed out that the Siamese might have been guilty of many excesses towards the Malays, but the former had also been subjected to much deliberate

provocation. Furthermore, the disaffection in those areas had been to very large extent organised from Malaya with the knowledge and indeed, the approval, of certain British authorities. To Thompson quoted a report from the 'Pan-Malayan Review of Political and Security Intelligence' of October 13, 1948. The Intelligence Review revealed that the Malays in South Siam were made to believe that they would receive British support for armed revolt against the Siamese authorities. In fact, a splinter group of *GEMPAR* known as *KRIS*⁷⁶ had issued a well-made metal badge carrying the words, in English, 'NEW MALAYA', to its members as well as to the Malays in South Siam. The distribution was said to be part of the scheme connected with the invasion of Siam by British troops although British Advisers and Chief Police Officers, said the report, had made it quite plain that there could be no armed aid for Malays in South Siam 'as the matter stands at present'.

Thompson commented that while it was gratifying to observe that British Advisers and chief Police officers had made it plain to the agitators that there could be no armed help for the Malays in South Siam it would be noted that their advice was apparently qualified by the words 'as the matter stands at present'. It would interest him to know what that qualification means. Apart from that, the intimate association which apparently existed between some of the British officials in Kelantan, particularly and person actively creating disaffection in the territory of a foreign state with which the British Government were in friendly relations and upon whose economic collaboration in rice exports Malaya depended left, in his opinion, 'a very nasty taste in the mouth'. He warned the Foreign Office that unless those British officials could be made to understand the wider issues at stake, they were certainly heading for grave complications for which the officials in question would bear a heavy responsibility.

At the meeting in the Colonial Office, which was attended by MacDonald and Foreign Office Officials, Grey and A.M. Palliser, the question of the political situation in South Siam was discussed.⁷⁷ MacDonald pointed out that Thompson's suspicions of the intentions of the Malayan authorities against the Siamese were entirely baseless. He had tried to make that clear to Thompson, as had the Commander-in-Chief, General Rithchie, and Sir Ralph Hone or Schrivener. On his return to Singapore, he hoped to have a further talk with Thompson and would try to clear up their differences once and for all. With regard to Cunyngham-Brown's case, he was sorry that the method of dealing with Cunyngham-Brown had been quite so abrupt and a number of persons' susceptibilities thereby offended.

Commenting on the issue, A.M. Palliser said,

Although Mr. MacDonald is, of course, entirely sincere in his protestations and it is clear, that all the senior officials, both civil and military, in Malaya have no sinister designs upon Siam, I have no doubt that amongst the junior officials on the border there is inevitably a good deal of anti-Siamese feeling; just as in Siam although in Bangkok everyone declares their willingness to cooperate with the Malayan authorities and to give liberal

treatment to the Patani Malays, in South Siam itself corruption is rife and a certain amount of oppression undoubtedly takes place.

The solution to this, however, clearly lies in a better understanding between our Embassy and the Malayan authorities and the 'F.O. set-up' in the Cathay Building. Unless Thompson is satisfied in his own mind that no one who matters in Malaya wants to turn Siam into a British colony, he will find it hard to put our case to the Siamese; and unless the Malayan authorities make it clear to their juniors that the Siamese are an independent people whose independence has to be respected, the Malays will continue to receive covert support from ignorant and prejudiced officials.⁷⁸

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, after consultation with the Colonial Secretary and MacDonald, replied that the whole matter would be investigated, but that meanwhile he was assured that it was not the British policy to encourage or incite the Malays across the border in Siam, and least of all to consider armed invasion.⁷⁹ He also authorised Thompson to inform the Siamese Government that the reports of subversive activities in Malaya, as alleged by the Siamese Deputy Foreign Minister, would be immediately investigated, but that such activities would have no kind of support either from Her Majesty's Government or from the Colonial authorities.

The Colonial Office also telegraphed to Sir Henry Gurney, the new High Commissioner for Malaya, requesting him to look into the Siamese allegations, and to submit a report.⁸⁰ They also telegraphed about Cunyngham-Brown. On the latter question, Sir Henry Gurney replied that he had heard nothing from Bangkok about the reasons for Cunyngham-Brown's dismissal, and that he was very distressed at the way in which one of his officers had been treated.⁸¹ He said that Cunyngham-Brown was not informed of the reason for his suspension from duty and had been given no opportunity of defending himself. He requested the Colonial Office to seek an explanation from Thomson for his action.

Soon after accepting the telegram from Gurney, Sir O. Sargent telegraphed to Thompson on November 4, mentioning to him Gurney's letter to the Colonial Office asking for an explanation for Cunyngham-Brown's dismissal.⁸² Sir O. Sargent agreed that it was within Thompson's own rights in relieving Cunyngham-Brown of his duties and in any case Cunyngham-Brown was wholly incorrect in writing as he did to Sir Henry Gurney and MacDonald since as a consular Office any recommendations or suggestions in the first place should be to Thompson. To solve the matter with the Colonial authorities, Thompson should discuss it personally with Gurney and MacDonald. At the same time they also could discuss about Siamese border policy. The best procedure was for him to attend the conference of United Kingdom and Administrative Representatives in Southeast Asia which was going to be held in Singapore in mid-November.

Realising the importance of settling the matter locally, Thompson agreed

to go to Singapore.

Meanwhile, Thompson had discussed the alleged persecution of the Malays by the local Siamese authorities with Pibul Songgram.⁸³ He told Pibul that those reports had caused some concern to the Malayan authorities, with consequent detriment of relations with Siam. While he personally thought that many of those reports were exaggerated he was finding his role as defence counsel for the Siamese increasingly difficult. It was high time, he argued, for the Siamese Government to speak out openly and frankly. The whole situation should be investigated on the spot by responsible authorities and their findings published. Should such an investigation reveal abuses then those should be corrected. As things stood, bitter enemies of the Siamese were constantly vocal while the Siamese Government themselves remained consistently quiet.

Pibul told Thompson that his cabinet had decided to form a 'Siamese Security Commission of the South'. One of the tasks of the Commission was to ascertain the facts in the Malay provinces so that accurate information regarding the general situation might be available for publicity. He had no objection to the attachment of Captain Dennis to the Commission in any tour of inspection undertaken by the Commission.

Following the discussion, Thompson wrote a personal letter to Pibul seeking amplification of what he said to him during the discussion.⁸⁴

On November 3, Pibul replied.⁸⁵ Pibul assured Thompson that the welfare of the Malays in the four Southern Provinces would be placed under special consideration of the Siamese Government. Earnest efforts would be made to correct the erroneous impression that they did not enjoy the same rights and privileges as all Siamese nationals. Based on the reports submitted by the Commission to the Government, several reforms were recommended to satisfy the aspirations of the Malays in the southern *changwats*. These reforms covered three major aspects: Administration, Education and Military service. Broadly, the new measures promised that officials appointed to the Southern provinces would in the future be well versed in Islamic customs and traditions and a high Muslim official (the Chularajamontri) was to be appointed to advise the government in Islamic matters. It also included the changing of the calendar to the Muslim weekend; aid for construction of mosques; observance of Islamic law in all matters of marriage and inheritance; acceptance of traditional Islamic dress in all government offices; establishment, at government expense, of a central Islamic institute with boarding facilities for intermediate and high school education; a special curriculum in Malay in primary school; and equality of entrance for Muslims into the Siamese army, navy and police. As regards the military service, the Malays had the same rights and obligations as the inhabitants of Siam. The most important aspect of these reforms was the guaranteed equality of Muslims with the Siamese nationals and guaranteed freedom to follow the Islamic faith. Pibul Songgram hoped these reforms would dissipate any

misunderstanding and prejudice which resulted from deliberate mischief-makers, rumours and exaggerates stories. However, he was still of the opinion that the principal sources of such propaganda were Patani Muslim leaders now residing in Malaya.

Reporting to the Foreign Office, Thompson argued that Pibul's letter fully supported his contentions that the Central Government in Bangkok were not animated by any desire to persecute the Malays nor to tread upon their religious susceptibilities.⁸⁶ The measures relating to local employment, education, military service and respect for Islamic customs and traditions were indeed admirable. In any oriental country, however and indeed in many others, allowance must be made for the inefficiency and corrupt practices of native functionaries stationed in wild country remote from ministerial control. In that particular instance, the situation had been envenomed by subversive propaganda persistently carried on among the Malays probably ever since the Japanese collapsed, by persons residing in that territory, such as Mahyideen, in hope of attaining certain personal aims and ambitions. Thompson added that this agitation had done much harm, for it had not only led Southern Malays to adopt aggressive tactics, but also to look for British support. The inevitable result had been harshness and worse on the part of local Siamese authorities whose attitude could scarcely have been improved by their well-founded suspicious of the sympathy of many British officials and other in Malaya for Malay irredentism in South Siam. In all the circumstances and in view of the imperative necessity to avoid quite unnecessary and dangerous complications in the border zone, he hoped that the Prime Minister Pibul's letter would be studied in London and in Malaya with due care of its merits. He also hoped that the investigation promised by the Foreign Office recently would be pressed. Ever since the problem of the Malays began to assume menacing proportions in early 1948, the British Embassy had worked hard for a detente. Having regard to subsequent developments and in general to the wider issues raised by the situation in Southeast Asia as a whole, he thought it reasonable to expect their efforts would now be effectively seconded in Malaya itself.

On November 14, Thompson, accompanied by his senior officials, left Bangkok for Singapore to attend the conference.⁸⁷ As Sir Henry Gurney was not able to attend the conference, Thompson flown to Kuala Lumpur. He was accompanied by MacDonald, the Commissioner-General.

The meeting in Kuala Lumpur appeared to be a successful one as it not only removed the tension between Thompson and Gurney regarding the Cunyngham-Brown case but also reviewed the Patani Malay problems. Thompson did not hesitate to express the view that he had probably been precipitate and wrong in his action in suspending Cunyngham-Brown from his duties at Songkhla. On the Malayan side, a similar concession was made. It was agreed that Cunyngham-Brown was wrong in addressing a letter to MacDonald and Sir Henry Gurney which he was not prepared to pass to Thompson.

As regards the Patani Malays problems, Thompson reiterated warning that so long as the Malayan authorities allowed the exiled Patani leaders, such as Mahyideen, to carry out their anti-Siamese activities, the situation in the four provinces would remain troublesome. It would only provoke the Siamese authorities to take repressive measures against them. He produced an enamel Union Jack badge, one of the many that had been distributed among the Malays in South Siam as 'propaganda for the cession' of the border provinces to the Federation of Malaya. So far the Malayan authorities had done absolutely nothing to curb Mahyideen or GEMPAR beyond oral advice. He hoped the Malayan authorities would take effective steps to curb those activities. Only when those steps were taken would the Malayan authorities be able to rely on the Siamese cooperation against the Communist terrorists who infested the common border.

Sir Henry Gurney and MacDonald reassured Thompson that the Patani movement had no support from the Malayan authorities and they also agreed to take steps to curb the activities of the Patani exiled-leaders in Malaya.

Soon after the Kuala Lumpur meeting, MacDonald made an official visit to Siam. This was the first time after the war that a high-level British mission visited Siam. It was greatly hoped that the visit would further strengthen Malayan-Siamese relations, particularly at a time when cooperation between the two was strongly needed to fight against the communists along the common border.⁸⁸

On December 2, a conference was held in Bangkok between British side led by MacDonald and the Siamese Government headed by Pibul Songgram.⁸⁹ Pibul Songgram assured MacDonald that his government was willing to cooperate with the Malayan authorities in anti-Communist measures in the South. To prove this he mentioned that the General Officer Commanding 5th District had already established good personal relations with Captain Dennis, the British Consul at Songkhla. He also agreed with MacDonald's suggestion that a conference should be held in Songkhla between Malayan and the Siamese Military and Civil authorities on border problems. As regards the Patani Malays, Pibul still blamed the activities of the Patani exiles in Kelantan in creating disaffection in South Siam. MacDonald, for his part, gave a very clear and frank exposition of the whole problem as seen in Malaya. In the course of his remarks, he gave his assurances about the British determination to respect the territorial integrity of Siam and dealt in the most convincing manner with the allegations that sympathies with the Patani Malays were partly inspired by their desire to occupy or otherwise take over tin-producing areas. He congratulated Pibul Songgram on his recent declaration of policy towards the Malays but indicated politely that this policy would be judged by the extent to which it was effectively applied by the local authorities. He also stressed that British officials were seeking to prevent disaffection from being organised from Malayan territory and, in short, made every effort to dissipate any premature suspicions of British

good faith.

MacDonald's talks with Pibul seemed to clear away a few remaining causes of possible misunderstanding between Malaya and Siam. The talks also reflected the desire on both sides to cooperate more effectively towards solving the border problems.

The Patani problem was discussed again between the Siamese and Malayan officials in Songkhla January 6-7, 1949.⁹⁰ The item on the Patani problem was under the responsibility of the Civil (Political) Sub-Committee. This Committee was presided over by Phya Amorit Damrong, the Siamese Regional Commissioner. The British representatives consisted of W.F. Churchill, British Adviser, Kelantan, and his assistant, Lawton, Whittington, British Counsellor, Bangkok and Captain Dennis, the British Consul, Songkhla. The Siamese side was represented by Phya Amorit Damrong, the Regional commissioner, and the Governors of Songkhla, Patani, Yala Narathiwat and Setul.

The discussions at the conference revealed a clear divergence of views on the importance of the threat posed by the Malay Separatists. The question of Patani Malays separatism was introduced by Phya Amorit Damrong, who indicated the Siamese Government's deep concern over the activities of some of the leaders of the irredentist movement who had their based in Kelantan. In response, Churchill gave a detailed explanation during the course of which he claimed that many Malays, chiefly 'ignorant peasants' had crossed the border to express complaints, but that to his knowledge, only to had ever asked for arms. He insisted that the Kelantan authorities were prepared to take action against anyone caught 'forming false hopes of Malayan armed assistance for dissent Muslims' from Siam, or inciting them to violence. Churchill assured the Siamese representatives that Mahyideen had kept quiet and had done nothing at all save grant interviews and distribute food to needy refugees. He had also become discredited in passive attitude and counsel of non-violence. He had disassociated himself completely from such organisations as *GEMPAR* and *NEW MALAYA*. Tengku Abdul Jalal was not working with Mahyideen. He also was not active but, Churchill imagined, he might turn to violence as he was hot-headed. Churchill said he could not guarantee Tengku Abdul Jalal's conduct. Tengku Petra was, in Churchill's opinion, an elderly man, slow and stupid, lacking in energy, who was not apparently doing anything and unlikely to take action. As regard Chaem Promyong or Haji Shamsuddin, Churchill informed the meeting that he had advised the Federal Government to put him in restricted residence away from the Siamese border whatever his activities might be. The Kelantan authorities were on the watch for and ready to take action against anyone who might be caught forming false hopes of Malayan armed assistance for dissident Muslims from South Siam or inciting those people to violence. Churchill classed *GEMPAR* and *NEW MALAYA* as 'catch-penny' political societies whose activities were devoted chiefly to collecting funds which the

organisers misappropriated. Both these organisations were moribund.

He concluded by stressing that if at any time any evidence was produced of subversive activities against Siam by any one living in Kelantan, the Malayan authorities would take the strongest action possible.

The Siamese representatives were far from satisfied with Churchill's explanations, insisting that they had evidence (some of which was produced in the form of documents badges, uniforms and flags made in British in Malaya) in support of their claim that leaders such as Mahyideen, Nai Chaem were still extremely active in fomenting and supporting the separatist movement. The Siamese delegates also raised the hostile attitude of the Malay press and asked what assistance it was possible for the Malayan authorities to give in curbing the tendentious and offensive articles which appeared from time to time. The Malayan delegates explained that there was freedom of the press in Malaya and that the British and Malayan authorities themselves were often the subject of 'scurrilous and objectionable attacks', about which they could do little, from the same source. They also mentioned the lack of effective publicity from the Siamese side.

To overcome the problem, the Siamese Government was advised to organise a publicity campaign in Malaya by establishing a competent information officer at Singapore. There should be closer liaison between the official publicity organisations of the Siamese and Malayan governments. Churchill thought that the Malayan publicity Department might be able to make effective use of suitable Siamese material, if such were supplied. The Siamese Regional Commissioner expressed his hope that the Malayan Government might take up a more actively pro-Siamese position in its official publicity. Selected Malayan newspaper correspondents should be invited to tour South Siam and other parts of Siam. Correspondents should also be invited to the Southern provinces from Bangkok. Both sides agreed on the need to improve frontier and customs control, and the British representatives undertook to consider what could be done to 'liquidate the nest' of Patani Malays in Kota Bharu.

Soon after the conference, Thompson advised the Kelantan state authorities to take action against 'a clique of leaders of the irredentist movement settled in Kota Bharu'.⁹¹ He argued:

..whatever may be the opinion of the Kelantan authorities as to the innocence of their present activities, the existence of this clique must obviously be a most disturbing influence and, in the eyes of the Siamese, is the chief cause of disaffection in the 'Malay' province of South Siam.⁹²

Apart from taking action against Chaem Promyong or Haji Shamsuddin, Thompson considered that similar action should also be taken against Tengku Abdul Jalal and Tengku Abdul Kadir Petra. Failing to do that, Thompson feared

that the Siamese would not provide an effective and genuine cooperation to the Malayan government against Chinese terrorists.

Thereafter, the Kelantan states authorities began to take action against the Patani separatist leaders in Kelantan. Nai Chaem Promyong or Haji Shamsuddin, a close associate of Pridi Banamyong and a former *Chularajamontri*, was under police supervision in Pasir Puteh district for twelve months from January 1949 before he was extradicted to Siam in early 1950. Similar orders were made against Tengku Abdul Jalal and Tengku Abdul Kadir Petra. Tengku Abdul Jalal was placed under restrictions under the Restricted Residence Enactment in Perak from February until July 1949, when he was allowed to leave and stay in exile in Singapore. Tengku Abdur Kadir Petra and some of his followers were placed under restricted residence in Pasir Puteh district, 60 miles from the Kelantan-Siam border. As for Mahyideen, he retired from Patani politics after increasing pressure from the Federal and State authorities. On April 30, 1954, Mahyideen died a frustrated man.

As for Haji Sulong, he was finally put on trial in Nakornsithammarat province on February 24, 1949. The trial ended in a fairly mild sentence. The court dismissed charges of sedition, but it imposed a seven-year sentence on him for 'libelling the government' in pamphlets distributed to the local population.⁹³ He made an appeal, but to no effect. He was jailed, however, for only three years and six months, and was released to return to Patani in 1952 on the understanding that he would not involve himself in politics.⁹⁴ In 1954, Haji Sulong had mysteriously disappeared. The prevailing opinion among the Patani nationalists was that Haji Sulong had been killed by the Siamese Police under the order of General Phao Siyanound, the Director-General of Police.⁹⁵

Thus, with the restrictions imposed on the Patani leaders by the Kelantan state authorities and the subsequent dissolution of *GEMPAR* in early 1949, the political movement among the Patani Malays in Malaya become dormant. The sudden death of Haji Sulong and Mahyideen, the two well-known Patani leaders, had added a further blow to the Patani separatist movement.

As for the Siamese Government, the crisis seemed to have passed. The Siamese Government presumably hoped to reconcile the Muslim community by what it considered to be great improvements in the general conditions of the region. In return for the Malayan cooperation in curbing the Malay separatist activities, the Siamese authorities agreed to sign a police border cooperation agreement on 1 September 1949 which allowed for the police forces of both sides the right to send units into each other's territory in 'hot pursuit' of terrorists.⁹⁶

¹Ibrahim Syukri, *History of the Malay Kingdom of Patani*, Pasir Puteh, Kelantan (n.d); K. Wenk, *The Restoration of Rama I, 1782-1809*, Arizona, 1968; M.L. Koch, 'Patani and the Development of Thai State', *JMBRAS*, Vol. 50, pt. II (1977); Nantawan Haemindra, 'The Problems of the Thai Muslims in the Four Southern Provinces of Thailand (part I)',

JSEAS, Vol. VII, No. 2 (September 1976); Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, 'Sistem Thesaphiban dan Kesannya ke atas kedaulatan dan kewibawaan Raja-raja Melayu Patani', *JEBAT*, bil. II, UKM (1991/92); Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, 'Patani: The Search for Security and Independence', *AKADEMIKA*, 31 (Julai 1987); W.F. Vella, *Siam Under Rama III, 1824-51*, New York, 1957.

⁵Petition dated 1 November 1945 in *Tengku Abdul Jalal Papers*.

³*Ibid.*

⁴San Francisco Conference was held on 25 April 1945. One of the greatest accomplishment of the small states in San Francisco was the drafting of Chapter XI of the Charter, entitled: 'Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories'. It contained the key principle that in the administration of such territories the interests of the inhabitants are paramount, and it obligated the Colonial powers to advance the inhabitants political, economic, social and educational welfare. See, A. Leroy Bennett., *International Organisations: Principle and Issues*, Singapore, 1991.

⁵Petition dated 1 November 1945, *op. cit.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷For a detailed discussions on Anglo-Thai peace negotiations see, Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, 'The Anglo-Thai Peace Settlement Negotiations, 1945-1946', *JEBAT*, 17 (1989); Nicholas Tarling, 'Rice and Reconciliation: The Anglo-Thai Peace Negotiations of 1945', *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 66, 2 (1978).

⁸Petition dated 15 January 1945 in *Tengku Abdul Jalal Papers*.

⁹Bird to SACSEA, 16 February 1946, FO 371/54421 (F2433/1342/40).

¹⁰Brain to Sterndale Bennett, 31 January 1946, FO 371/54421 (F2433/1342/40).

¹¹Bird to SACSEA, 16 February 1946, FO 371/54421 (F2433/1342/40).

¹²Wilson Young to Thompson, 21 May 1946, FO 371/54421 (F2433/1342/40).

¹⁴For details see, Surin Pitsuwan, *Islam and Malay Nationalism: A Case Study of the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand*, Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, Bangkok, 1985.

¹⁵J.J. Paskin to J.C. Sterndale Bennett, 7 May 1946. FO 371/54421 (F6978/1342/40)

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Minute by A.C.S Adams, 19 February 1946 in J.J. Paskin to J.C. Sterndale Bennett, 7 May 1946, FO 371/ 5421 (F6978/1342/40)

¹⁹Ibrahim Syukri, *op. cit.*

²⁰Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, 'The Return of Phibunsongkhram and the November 1947 Coup', in Nik Hassan Suhaimi et.al. (ed.), *Sumbangsih: Kumpulan Esei*, Jabatan Sejarah, UKM, Bangi, 1988.

²¹Ibrahim Syukri, *op. cit.* p. 71.

²²*Ibid.*

²³See, Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, *op. cit.*

²⁴*Malayan Security Service (MSS)*, Political Intelligence Journal, No. 4/48, dated 29 December 1947, CO 537/3682.

²⁵Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen was the fifth child of the last Raja of Patani. Upon passing his School Certificate, he joined the Kelantan Civil Service. He was made Inspector of Malay Schools, which appointment was changed to Superintendent of

Education in 1939. The turbulence of the war years saw him in India, where he was parachuted into Malaya to organise guerilla warfare during the Japanese occupation. There is evidence indicating that during this period he had been led to believe that he would receive British support in his attempt to liberate Patani from the Siamese occupation, which thereafter would join British Malaya. For his work in rescuing survivors of the ill-fated 'S.S Kuala', which was bombed by the Japanese planes while on her way out to India, he was made a 'Member of the British Empire'. For a brief account of Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen's role during the war see, Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, 'Patani: The Search for Security and Independence', *AKADEMIKA*, Jurnal FSKK, UKM, 31 (Julai 1987).

²⁶ *Straits Times*, 30 October 1947.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ MSS, Political Intelligence Journal, No. 4/48, dated 29 February 1948, CO 537/3682.

²⁹ Notes on GEMPAR, CO 717/52286.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ See, 'Some Facts About Malays in South Siam', in *Tengku Abdul Jalal Papers*.

³² Nik Ahmed Kamil, 'Political Climate in South Thailand, 1 May 1948', in *Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen Papers*.

³³ B.W. Jones, 'Pattani's Appeals to UNO', *The Eastern World*, April 1948.

³⁴ Mahyideen to Jones, 22 February 1948, in *Jones papers*.

³⁵ Mahyideen to Jones, 6 March 1948, in *Jones Papers*.

³⁶ Thompson to Foreign Office, 8 March 1948. FO 371/69998 (F3612/21/40).

³⁷ *Liberty*, 5 March 1948.

³⁸ Thompson to Foreign Office, 8 March 1948, FO 371/69998 (F3612/21/40).

³⁹ G. Madoc, 'Report on Enquiry into Malay Unrest in South Siam', 8 April 1948. CO 537/3682.

⁴⁰ *Straits Times*, 5 February 1948

⁴¹ Gent to Whittington, 7 April 1948, FO 371/69992 (F8279/21/40).

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Thak Chaloemtiarana., *Thailand: The Politics of Domestic Paternalism*, Social Science Association of Thailand, Bangkok, 1979. pp.36-37.

⁴⁴ *Singapore Free Press*, 14 April 1948.

⁴⁵ *Straits Times*, 9 February 1948.

⁴⁶ *Straits Times*, 29 April 1948.⁴⁷ Nik Ahmed Kamil, 'Political Climate in South Thailand, in *Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen Papers*; Churchill to Gent, 1 May 1948, in *Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen Papers*; Nik Ahmed Kamil to Gent, 3 May 1948, in *Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen Papers*.

⁴⁸ Commissioner-General to Colonial Office, 5 May 1948. FO 371/69999 (F6613/21/40).

⁴⁹ Minute by A.M Pallisser, 13 May 1948. FO 371/69992 (F6613/21/40).

⁵⁰ *Singapore Free Press*, 18 May 1948.

⁵¹ *Straits Times*, 16 May 1948; Singapore to Foreign Office, 18 May 1948, FO 371/69993 (F71651/21/40).

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³*Ibid.*

⁵⁴Singapore to Foreign Office, 18 May 1948. FO 371/69993 (F7165/21/40).

⁵⁵Whittington to Foreign Office, 21 May 1948. FO 371/69993 (F7369/21/40).

⁵⁶Foreign Office to Bangkok, 28 May 1948. FO 371/69993 (F7590/21/40).

⁵⁷Whittington to Foreign Office, 27 May 1948. FO 371/69993 (F7590/21/40).

⁵⁸Foreign Office to Bangkok, 28 May 1948, FO 371/69993 (F7590/21/40).

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰MacDonald to Whittington, 4 June 1948. FO 371/69993 (F8103/21/40).

⁶¹Whittington to MacDonald, 7 June 1948. FO 371/69993 (F8103/21/40).

⁶²Williams to Grey, 8 June 1948. FO 371/69993 (F8190/21/40).

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴MacDonald to Foreign Office, 22 June 1948. FO 371/69993 (F8768/21/40).

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸For a detailed discussions on the Communist Insurgency in Malaya see, Anthony Short., *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-1960*, London, 1960; Richard Stubbs, *Heart and Minds in Guerilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1989; Gene Z. Hanrahan, *The Communist Struggle in Malaya*, University Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1971.

⁶⁹*Utusan Melayu*, 6 September 1948; *Times*, 10 September 1948.

⁷⁰C.Brown to Thompson, 11 October 1948 in Thompson to Denning, 14 October 1948, FO 371/70000 (F15181/21/40).

⁷¹Col. Heslop, 'Report on a visit to G.H.Q. FARELFHQ, Malayan District and Siam-Malayan Border, 14 October 1948', in Thompson to Denning, 14 October 1948 FO 371/69999 (F15181/21/40)

⁷²Thompson to Denning, 14 October 1948, FO 371/70000 (F15181/21/40).

⁷³Thompson to Foreign Office, 22 October 1948, FO 371/69999 (F14816/21/40).

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶The 'Cross Krises' or 'New Malaya' came into existence after the Dusun Nyior uprising. It was formed by the anti-Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen's group in GEMPAR who was dissatisfied with his moderate attitude. It was believed that 'Cross Krises' organisation was headed by Nik Mahmood bin Haji Nik Majid. The aim of the organisation was no different from GEMPAR i.e to liberate South Thailand from the Siamese rule and amalgamate it with British Malaya. See, Tengku Mahmud Mahyideen, 'Comment on L. MacDonald's article on 'Cross Krises' Movement', n.d, in *Tengku Abdul Jalal Papers*.

⁷⁷Thompson to Foreign Office, 26 October 1948, FO 371/69999 (F15031/21/40); Gurney to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 24 October 1948, CO 537/3682.

⁷⁸Minute by A.M. Pallisser on Scrivener to Foreign Office, 25 October 1948, FO 371/69999 (F15515/21/40).

⁷⁹Foreign Office to Bangkok, 23 October 1948, FO 371/70000 (F15111/21/40).

⁸⁰Colonial Office to Kuala Lumpur, 25 October 1948, FO 371/69999 (F14874/21/40).

⁸¹Kuala Lumpur to Colonial Office, 4 November 1948, FO 371/70000 (F15511/21/G).

⁸²Foreign Office to Bangkok, 4 November 1948, FO 371/70000 (F15476/21/40).

⁸³Thompson to Foreign Office, 6 November 1948, FO 371/70001 (F15719/21/40).

⁸⁴Thompson to Foreign Office, 20 October 1948, FO 371/69999 (F14674/21/40).

⁸⁵Thompson to Foreign Office, 4 November 1948, FO 371/70000 (F15719/21/40).

⁸⁶*Ibid.*

⁸⁷MacDonald to Foreign Office, 17 November 1948, FO 371/70001 (F16259/21/40); MacDonald to Foreign Office, 26 November 1948, FO 371/70002 (F17593/21/40).

⁸⁸*Bangkok Post*, 30 November 1948.

⁸⁹Thompson to Foreign Office, 2 December 1948, FO 371/70001 (F17041/21/40).

⁹⁰Thompson to Bevin 13 January 1949, FO 371/76289 (F1326/1001/40).

⁹¹*Ibid.*

⁹²Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok, 10 February 1949, CO 717/156; Thompson to Kuala Lumpur, 16 February 1949, CO 717/156;

⁹³Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok, 31 March 1949, CO 717/156.

⁹⁴*Bangkok Post*, 1 March 1954;

⁹⁵Gage to Foreign Office, 7 December 1954, FO 371/112264 (DS 1015/24).

⁹⁶Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud, 'Malayan-Thai Police Border Agreement September 1, 1949', *Jurnal SARJANA*, Fakulti Sastera dan Sains Sosial, Univ. Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1989.